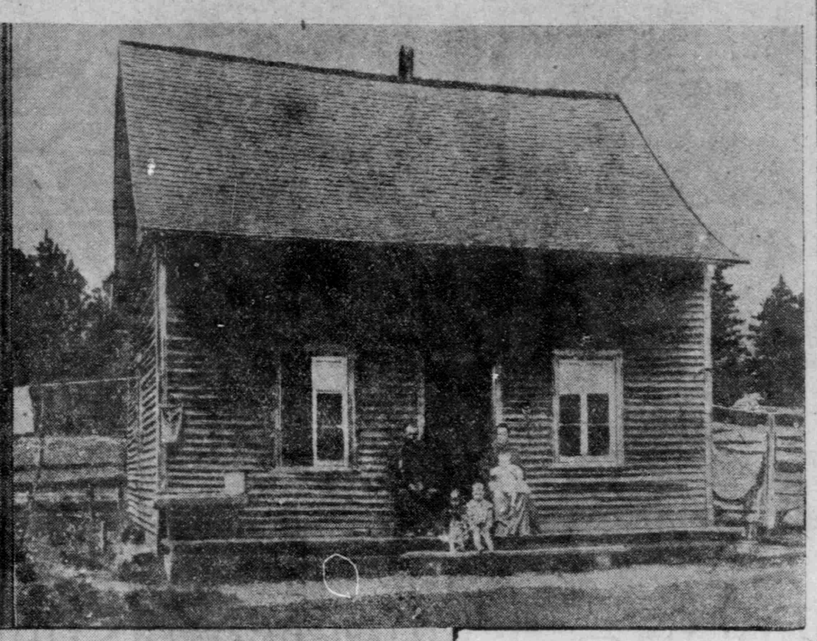
# Glimpses of the Quebec Habitant

BY FREDERIC J. HASKIN.

Two Distinct Habitant Types.

Home of a Habitant.



Marie Louise of the Country.

Marie Louise of the City.

MONTREAL, Nov. 18.—One of the most unique personalities on the American continent is the rural French Canadian of the province of Quebec. The habitant type is one that all students of human nature have found worthy of study. Springing from one race and dwelling among another, the character of this frugal farmer and sturdy backwoodsman seems to present a mass of contradictions. His language is either degraded French or mongrel English; he is nearly always poor yet invariably happy; although he is a constant churchgoer he is not religious in a spiritual sense; his patriotism is of a peculiar sort in that it does not savor of allegiance to France or concern for the Dominion of Canada, but is measured by the mere ambition to preserve French dominance in the province of Quebec.

### "Home, Sweet Home."

The one mark of the habitant is his love of home. The Grand Trunk railway, for several hundred miles east of Montreal, has a large local patronage which it designates as "the moccasin trade." The French Canadian who is employed away from his birthplace will spend his last cent to visit the home folks. The instinct of nativity is so strong in these people that when one of them commits a crime the officers do not attempt to track him—they merely find his haunt and keep watch over it. The miscreant's craving for familiar scenes will soon overcome his fear and prudence so that he will return to his accustomed paths.

The reluctance to sever home ties is shown in the character of the farms, which are merely long lanes with rows of houses on the ends. When the eldest son marries, the father splits the home place and gives the youth a slice of land. The sons often become so numerous and the slices so thin that, in order to continue the multiplication, a quartering process is necessary. To maintain an ever increasing family upon what was often sparse soil originally, requires an exercise of industry and practice of economy which, if applied in the more fertile and expansive regions of the west, would soon make the toilers rich.

### "Poor As a Church Mouse."

The inhabitants of the remote districts of Quebec are forced to subsist with a frugality which seems incredible in these times of almost universal plenty. The men smoke home grown tobacco which sells for ten cents per pound, and which is so rank that it might safely be declared expensive if it were given away. The green tea which is used, is of such a cheap quality that a traveler declared it had no more strength or flavor than so much dried hay. Instead of butter a thick grease is utilized which is obtained from the drippings of pork and beef. Before this mixture is spread upon sliced bread it is often thickened with finely chopped pieces of lean beef. The economy of a household is frequently so strict as to even preclude expenditures for such necessary articles of hardware, as nails, hinges, etc.; hence we find homemade furniture fastened together with wooden pegs. An ingenious device is a swing constructed without either rope or nails, the whole contraption being made of joined pieces of wood.

After years of stinting and saving the patient habitant may accumulate enough money to build an addition to his shanty, but he rarely enters this newer portion of his house. The force of past habits, meager and cramped and pitiful though they were, are strong upon him and he cannot shake them off. The members of the family pass in and out the back way. Each one remans in the old quarters as unmindful of the new ones as if they were not there. The shanty triumphantly holds its own against the modern intruder that towers over it. The new house may contain store furniture and china dishes, but the family sticks to the benches and crockery and bunks of the shack. The stranger and the parish priest are received in the new addition, but the neighbors always enter the back door and partake of hospitality in the kitchen. The new front is imposing to the passer-by. It is an evidence of prosperity that cannot be refuted, but aside from this it is of so little account to its possessors that its erection may well be said to have been a waste of time and money.

### "Old House and the New."

In the entire collection of Dr. Drummond's excellent poems depicting the lives of the habitant people, there is none more pathetic or truthful than the one entitled: "The Old House and the New." It is the lament of an old man who has been moved out of his shanty by a stylish son-in-law. The old fellow tries to smoke away his restlessness and homesickness, but the "blues" won't down. The shanty looks forlorn and lonesome under the shadow of the big house. The broken windows and tottering chimney give the hut an appearance of utter dejection, but the more desolate it appears the more the old man's heart yearns for it. He made it with his own two hands, he says, and brought his old wife there when she was a girl bride. All the babies were born in it, and a number of them died in it. He broods and broods and then deserts the fine house on the hill to again occupy the tumbling shanty in the hollow.

The habitant's refusal to have his condition bettered has something of a counterpart in the experience which the United States government met when it first tried to induce the Indians to live in frame houses. Everything went well at the outset, but the red man soon moved back into his teepee in the grove, thereafter using his new house as a stable.

among the habitant folk. That their opinion on the subject of race suicide does not run counter to President Roosevelt's is attested by the large families that are encountered everywhere. The European custom of parents settling something on children when they marry is practiced among them. Whether it is due to caution made necessary by the meagerness of the surroundings, or to natural covetous instincts, cannot be explained, but it is certain that a homely girl with a dot of a few hundred dollars or a small tract of land at once becomes more attractive to the young men than one destitute of all save physical charms.

Illustrative of this point there is a story concerning a Yankee farmer who had married a French girl and settled in one of the back districts of Quebec. Although he had lived among the people for years, and his children had been brought up among them, this man retained enough of his American spirit to refuse to offer a cash bonus to get his girls married off; consequently, they threatened to become a drug on the market. Finally he relented and offered $500 with each one. At once came Pierre, a big, lumbering lout, who said: "I 'ear you give fi' 'ondred dollar wid Marie?" He was reluctantly told that such was the offer. "I 'ear you give fi' 'ondred dollar wid Julie?" He was told the same amount went with Julie. "Well Monsieur," said Pierre, "I tink I'll take de bot' o' 'em." The Yankee was so indignant at this attempt to joke about such a serious matter that he withdrew his offer at once, and his girls were forced to wait until they could find husbands who were willing to take them for themselves alone.

### When Marie Louise Marries.

A habitant wedding usually takes place early in the morning. The bride may have on a gown much finer than the surroundings would seem to warrant. Although she arrives in a covered wagon, she is attired in an outfit which cost several times as much as her father's house with all its furnishings. That it may take the greater portion of the year's crop to pay for it, and that she is to become the wife of a shantyman, does not seem to enter into the count for consistency. This is the one time in her life when Marie Louise wants style and she insists on having it. After the ceremony, the members of the wedding party repair to their vehicles and form into a procession, often consisting of twenty-five or thirty buggies, and proceed to make calls upon the friends of the young couple throughout the neighborhood. During each visit the wedding presents are exhibited "and all those in attendance drink to the health and prosperity of the high contracting parties," as the members of the rural press are wont to put it. On such festive occasions it is not unusual for thirsts to materialize while the party is journeying from place to place, in which event it is not at all impolite to halt the procession and pass the bottle.

Like all his cousins of Latin blood, the French-Canadian is a wily politician. He would rather be a lawyer and dabble in politics than to get rich by following some less exciting commercial pursuit. In making jobs he is as slippery as an eel. Although he may pledge his support here and there, he invariably votes one way—for the French candidate.

### An Election Story.

An operator of a mine in northern Quebec told me of an experience he had during the last election. He was a conservative and had in his employ at the mine 611 French voters, which is almost equivalent to saying that he had that many liberals under him. Sir Wilfred Laurier is a Frenchman and it has been the experience of election bosses that nothing can prevent the rank and file of his people from voting for him. This particular mining man knew this to be a fact so he decided to leave them alone. The men felt very kindly toward him because he had voluntarily raised their wages. When he made no overtures to them concerning their votes they seeemed surprised. As election drew near and nothing was said, the men became uneasy. At last they began sounding the boss on the subject. One or two at a time and then larger groups approached him. "Whom did he want them to vote for?" He told them to do as they pleased, but they insisted that he had raised their wages and they wanted to vote for his man. In referring to their loyalty, the leader used so many gestures and became so enthusiastic that his effort was akin to spell-binding. The employer assured them that if they felt so inclined, he would appreciate their support. So it was settled. When the count at that precinct was completed Sir Wilfred had 605 of the 611 French votes. Within a week after the election at least 100 of those foxy miners slyly approached the boss, one at a time as the occasion offered, to assure him upon their sacred word of honor that they had been one of the six who voted with him.

### Stronghold of the Church.

If the French-Canadian is loyal to his own in politics he is even more devoted to the support of his religion. The priest is a great man in every parish. The ambition of every habitant is to have one of his boys become a priest and another a lawyer, after that the rest may be shantymen of they choose. No country district in Quebec is too poor to afford its stone church. Montreal is noted for the number and excellence of its houses of worship. In the immediate vicinity of the Windsor hotel there are nine splendid edifices. These are grouped in such proximity that a small boy could stand on a given corner and almost throw a stone against the tower of each. One of them is built after the pattern of St. Peter's in Rome, being one-fourth its size. Farther away there is one that has $50,000 worth of gold leaf in the ceiling.

In the downtown locality in what might be called the financial district, where office buildings abound and where real estate is very valuable, priests may be seen hoeing vegetables upon land, one front foot of which would bring more than all the garden truck they can produce in several years, if the church authorities cared to sell it. When Mark Twain was in Montreal he twitted the inhabitants upon the number of their churches in a good-natured interview. At that time a discussion was taking place concerning the location of a new structure which was about to be erected. There was difficulty in securing a site. The humorist came out in the paper with one of his novel suggestions. "Why not save space," he said, "by building one on top of another, and using elevators to get into the second stories?"

### Old Folklore Tales.

The church has always been such a factor in the lives of the French-Canadians that their folklore tales and traditions abound with religious morals. One of these called the "Loup-Garon." According to this old story, the man who neglects to go to confession for seven years may be punished for his sins in a most terrible manner. Falling a prey to the infernal powers, he is transformed into the shape of a wolf and forced to roam at night, in accordance with the instincts of the beast, instead of securing the natural rest that comes to goldly folk. The only way he can be released from his punishment is to receive a bloody wound during his prowlings.

Another popular tradition is the one relating to "La Chasse-Galerie." This tells how the shantymen snowbound in the northern woods, used to make a contract with the devil to take them home in the night for a brief visit to their wives and sweethearts. These trips were made in the air in bark canoes. The arrangement was a desperate one such as no pious shantyman would enter into. Only profane and sacrilegious characters would venture to take such a risk. The devil gave them the power to navigate the air for that one night, with the understanding that if the name of God was mentioned, or a church steeple was touched during the flight, that he should have their souls for torture. There is many an old-timer who will solemnly affirm that he has seen the canoes passing overhead, and that he has heard the reckless, daredevils bandying each other as they plied their paddles in the air.

# LARGEST IRRIGATION PROJECT IN COUNTRY NEARS COMPLETION.

(See Page One, Section Two.)

THE west—the section of the country to which reclamation of desert land means most—is about to witness the opening of the greatest irrigation project ever undertaken or planned in the New World—the mammoth canal system of the Twin Falls Land & Water company of Idaho.

When the Snake river begins the work, next month, which enterprise and capital have made possoble—the watering of 271,000 acres of hitherto arid soil in southern Idaho—the dream of one man, I. B. Perrine, who saw before all others the one thing needed to complete Nature, will have been realized.

This irrigating project in Cassia and Lincoln counties, Idaho, differs in several material points from others now in process of completion under direct control of the government. By the Carey act the lands embraced in the canal system were withdrawn from the public domain by the state board of Idaho. The Carey act is a congressional measure by which desert lands are turned over to the state for reclamation, the state in turn contracting for this with private individuals. The latter are repaid for their work by the sale of water rights at a price fixed by the state. While individual capital is behind projects under the Carey act, they are under state supervision and control.

### One-Third Now Open.

Of the 270,000 acres included in the segregation of this, the third largest irrigating enterprise in the world, 130,000 acres are now open for settlement. A canal sixty-nine miles long will feed this vast area moisture, which has in the past been the one thing lacking to make it one of the garden spots of the west. Water will be conveyed within a half-mile of every quarter-section of the segregated property.

Already thousands of acres have been cleared of the dense sage and desert vegetation which covers the lands in their native state. When water is turned in, it will feed soil which is absolutely free of alkali or other substances injurious and which will remain mellow under cultivation. The soil is a fine volcanic ash, easily cultivated. As is well known, where sage brush grows thickest will be found the soil best adapted to agricultural pursuits under proper conditions.

### To Open Next Month.

The present calculations of the company are to turn the Snake river into the main canal about Dec. 10. At this date about thirty miles of the sixty-nine-mile canal will be available, leaving about thirty-nine miles to be completed within the next twelve months. When the gates are thrown open a river eighty feet wide at the channel botton, 112 feet wide at the water line and ten feet deep at center, will flow westerly on the south side of the Snake for a distance of twenty-six miles.

Here the diverted water will divide, one-half or part pursuing a high line, the other a low line. The latter branch, with a vertical drop of seventy-five feet, will afford thousands of horsepower. Eventually the two branches will meet further down, terminating at the canyon of the Salmon river.

Of first interest in any great irrigation project is the steam utilized—stolen from Nature to strengthen Nature. The Snake river rises thousands of feet above sea level in the very heart of Yellowstone park, Wyoming. There are two distinct heads, known as the North and South forks. The Snake flows or rather writhes westward across southern Idaho where the state is widest until a cubic point near the western limit of Idaho is reached. Then it takes a northly course and for two hundred miles form the boundary between Idaho and Oregon. It joins the Columbia river at Pasco, Wash.

During its journey of nearly a thousand miles between Yellowstone and the Columbia, the Snake drops 4,500 feet, its elevation at Pasco being about 500 feet. Throughout the greater part of its course the river is interrupted by cataracts, and only from the Washington-Idaho boundary to its mouth is it navigable. The gorge which the Snake cuts through the breadth of Idaho is narrow and steep-sided. It flows through canyons banked by volcanic overflows, as do, in general, its tributaries.

### Enormous Water Supply.

The water supply available for the Twin Falls scheme is enormous. So great is the river's discharge that the largest possible diversion for irrigation can have no appreciable effect upon the total flow, save in one or two months of the year. In a paper read by James D. Schuyler, vice president of the American Society of Civil Engineers, before the Eleventh Irrigation congress, at Ogden, Sept. 18, 1903, valuable statistics on the total flow of the Snake river near the main headworks of the irrigation canals were given. In part, Mr. Schuyler's report follows:

"The area of the drainage basin above Montgomery Ferry, near Minidoka, Ida., has been determined by the United States geological survey to be 22,600 square miles. The maximum discharge of the river at this point in 1897, as measured by the United States engineers in the month of May, was 47,480 cubic feet per second, the minimum flow, in September of that year, being 4,800 second-feet. In the calendar year of 1897 the total discharge was computed to be 9,334,300 acre-feet."

Of the total annual flow of the river, it is believed that not more than 10 or 15 per cent will ever be applied to the soil. A portion of this will, of course, return to the river in time by percolation from the irrigated fields.

All attempts to divert the Snake previous to the one which is nearing completion were made above American Falls, which is about fifty miles above Milner, the site of the Twin Falls dam. I. B. Perrine saw that Milner, the head of the great canyon of the Snake, was the place of all places to undertake the work of damming and diverting.

### Perrine Conceived Project.

I. B. Perrine came to southern Idaho, as a man of small means, from Indiana, about eighteen years ago. He was then only about 22 years old, but possessed of pluck and determination to succeed. He chose as a site for his home a canyon watered by the Blue lakes, so-called, which spring out of the ground about five miles below Shoshone falls. Here, with the aid of a partner, Tom Heinman, he began a long, hard struggle to change a barren tract into orchards that were to produce the finest fruit in the world.

To build a house it was necessary to let down lumber and tools over the edge of the canyon by means of rope and tackle. For a time both Perrine and Heinman stayed at the canyon and started reclaiming the soil and putting to good advantage the water supply furnished by Blue lakes. But Perrine soon found that money was needed to push things as speedily as he wished, so he agreed to go to Butte and work in the mines. With the money thus earned Heinman tended to developing the ranch and orchards at Blue lakes.

In June, 1893, Mr. Perrine came to S. B. Milner of Salt Lake and unfolded the scheme which he had conceived of diverting the waters of the Snake for irrigation purposes. His faith in the possibilities of the thing led to Colonel Milner to make an investigation and becoming convinced that the project was practicable. Governor F. W. Steunenberg and other Idaho men were also interested.

From then until 1900 the projectors were occupied chiefly in filing claims for water rights and having private surveys made. In 1900 State Engineer D. W. Ross made a survey and reported to the state of Idaho his investigations. This report agreed with those previously obtained that the irrigation enterprise was feasible and would prove of the greatest benefit to hundreds of miles of property as yet only a desert of sage.

In 1902 P. L. Kimberley and F. H. Buhl of Sharon, Pa., already largely interested in western mines, entered the company and agreed to put up the money needed to carry the enterprise to a successful conclusion.

Up to date nearly a million dollars has been outlayed. During the whole time of construction, dating from a year ago last April there have been 500 men continuously employed.

The site chosen for the headworks was about twenty-three miles east of Twin Falls, what is now the town of Milner.

Here the river is only fifty feet below the land level and aside from the fact that it is at the head of the great canyon proper, the course of the stream is obstructed by two rocky islands. Here, then, was the ideal spot to dam the Snake and hold it forever at the disposal of man for man's good.

As will be seen from the large photograph in the center, there are, or were, three channels. The two to the right or south were occupied only at high water, the stream being confined ordinarily to the north channel.

It was necessary, therefore, to build three dams, and this work was commenced in April, 1903. The middle and south dams are now completed. To build the north dam the great tunnel, one of the novel engineering features of the whole work, had to be built under the south island. This tunnel was found necessary in order that the dam foundations of the main channel might be laid. With the Snake once rushing through the new outlet, work was commenced on the north dam.

### Tunnel Through Island.

The tunnel, which was completed some time ago, and through which the water now rushes from Yellowstone to the Columbia, is seventy feet wide and 212 feet long. There are eight compartments, controlled by eight great gates. The longest of these is 212 feet in length, the shortest, on the extreme north, about 80 feet. The tunnel cost in excess of $100,000.

There are now discharging through the eight compartments 8,000 cubic feet of water per second, representing the entire volume of the Snake at this point and time. The capacity of the tunnel is much in excess of this figure. It is safe to say that this immense work, constructed at so great an outlay, will never be called into actual service as far as carrying away water not needed for the great canal is concerned. The surplus water will flow over the rim of the two islands, which are to be utilized as spillways.

The maximum wasteaway capacity provided in all the gates and spillways is, according to Consulting Engineer Schuyler, 166,000 second-feet. This includes the canal and drainage channels, and still the water would be at least a foot below the top of the dams. The maximum wasteaway capacity given above is over three times in excess of the greatest recorded discharge. Thus, even though the government reservoirs above give way, the headworks would be in no danger.

The dam on the north is larger than either of the other two. All three are constructed with a wood core, which runs from bank to bank, and which rests on bed-rock. Double thicknesses of plank were used in making the core, these being spiked to uprights every two feet. This core serves to check seepage. Even should leakage appear, it will lack sufficient velocity to do any harm. The total length of the three dams is in excess of 1,200 feet.

### Honeycomb of Water Gates.

In addition to the wasteaway outlets noted above, both islands have been provided with a system of waste gates which literally honeycomb them. There are nearly 200 gates in all, controlled by hand, and expected to prove amply sufficient to control the flow of the river at any time. Combined, they have a capacity of discharge equal to over 60,000 second-feet.

There are several engineering features with the great work which, like the tunnel, stand out above all others in interest. Among these is the Dry creek dam, which, in itself, is an engineering feat. This dam was built about eight miles from the intake on the main canal, for the purpose of avoiding a detour of several miles. Dry creek is the name of the small tributary which made the dam necessary. The dam is made of earth, and in one place is nearly fifty feet high. It is several thousand feet long. A reservoir has been formed by the embankment which will prove helpful in regulating the flow of the canal west of that point. This reservoir will have an area of nearly 2,000 acres.

The dam was completed only after great perseverance. Water had to be brought from a spring four miles away.

The canal headgates form another interesting feature. The gates are about eleven feet high and are hung on a center axle. They are semi-cylindrical in shape, the water pressure being exerted on the convex side. By means of a drop balance weight, the gates may be easily raised and lowered.

Still another novel feature is the drop pit which has been installed beneath the main canal a short distance from the intake. This pit is for the purpose of catching all debris, rocks, silt, wood, etc., which may work in past the gates. The objectionable matter will float along the bed of the canal, which for a few thousand feet is of smooth concrete, until the catch pit is reached.

This, as its name implies, is simply a sink in the bed of the canal, 600 feet in length. A large tree stump rolling along the canal drops into this as though over a cataract. Gates leading back into the Snake river will form a means of flushing the canal whenever necessary.

In this scheme, only the general idea which has been observed throughout is followed, namely, the giving back by means of laterals for better or worse, whatever has been taken from the great stream.

Not until nearly a year ago was all the machinery used in constructing the dams and works installed, owing to the difficulty of getting it from the east. Electricity has been employed almost wholly for power purposes. This is obtained by means of a thirty-one foot drop of a 100 second-feet stream of water upon a turbine wheel. About 500 horse power is thus obtained, the current being used for electric railway purposes, electric derricks, drills and shovels and for contrifugal pumps.

### Placer Miners Are Hoping.

There is one side of the project which has probably not occurred to persons not on the scene of action.

What will happen if, during some period of low water, the main canal should need all the stream—the whole Snake river? The result would be the bringing to light of the canyon beds below the dams, and here miners say will be found a rich harvest of good, yellow gold-dust.

It is not likely, however, that this will occur as soon as many might wish, for the canal will be ready for opening long before the low stage of the river begins.

Twin Falls is at present about twenty-three miles from the railroad. The Oregon Short Line passes through Kimama, from which a stage leaves for Cassia county. The Short Line, however, has already commenced construction on a line to Twin Falls which is likely to be the main thoroughfare from Salt Lake to the northwest and the coast. The new road leaves the main track fifty-six miles west of Pocatello, following the line of the great canal closely. The dam and headgates will be passed by the new line.

With the completion of the Short Line road quick connection will be given to a seaport and several inland markets, to which producers may ship with great profit. There will also, of course, be a good home and state demand.

One of the many big industries which it is planned will be brought to Twin Falls through the great irrigation project will be a $1,000,000 sugar beet factory to be erected by a Cleveland, O., capitalist by the name of Shaw. The factory will give employment throughout the year to 400 men. The fact that nowhere in the world can fruit be raised to better advantage it is believed will result in canneries being established, each of which will employ hundreds of men and women.

### Figures on the Work.

Here are some data on America's greatest irrigation enterprise:

The finished work will represent an expenditure of $2,500,000.

The completion of the project, it is estimated, will mean within five years an increased taxable valuation for the state of Idaho of $25,000,000, and an increase in population of over 25,000.

The main canal, together with laterals and ditches, would, if placed in line, reach from Salt Lake to San Francisco and back.

At a moderate expense more than 100,000 horse power may be obtained from Shoshone, Twin and Auger falls. This figure is much in excess of power actually developed in Utah today.

The city of Twin Falls has been laid out by the chief of construction of the World's fair grounds, St. Louis, and is of model design. Parks are planned, ground for the purpose having already been set apart.

The acreage of the segregated district is one-fourth as large as the state of Rhode Island, and nearly seven times as great as that of Salt Lake valley.

At one time during the construction of the headworks, there were 1,000 men employed. This small army has at no time been reduced to less than 500.

The land will sell at $25.50. Of this 50 cents represents the purchase price of the land, the balances goes for water rights.